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NSC BRIEFING

13 April 1960

ITALY

- I. Christian Democrats stalemated in intra-party struggle over the orientation of Italian government since Antonio Segni's rightist-supported cabinet resigned on 24 February.
  - A. Strong elements in party believe leftward electoral trend of recent years not sufficiently reflected in governments and government programs.
  - B. Segni seemed to be making progress toward a new tripartite government (CD, Democratic Socialists, and Republicans) based on Nenni Socialist parliamentary abstention, but suddenly withdrew under pressure from rightwing Christian Democrats.
  - C. Fernando Tambroni formed an all-Christian Democratic cabinet, but resigned at his party's request on 11 April because his two-vote majority in the chamber of deputies depended on the 24 neo-Fascists. (Plus 272 Christian Democrats and four ex-Monarchist independents.)
  - D. Should another attempt at a center-left government based on Socialist abstention be made and fail, an all-Christian Democratic caretaker government may be proposed to push through the budget, due by 31 October.
    1. A candidate less disliked personally than Tambroni might be asked to present minimum program.
    2. Another try at a center-left government could then be made in the fall.

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E. As a last resort, national elections may be called.

1. All parties would probably prefer to avoid national elections before the spring of 1961 in view of lack of preparedness and the tradition of holding elections in spring.

II. Meanwhile, political atmosphere in Rome reported "jumpy" with the Right fearing "imminent danger" from the Left, and vice versa.

- A. Tambroni, who remains Premier-designate until next candidate is ready to present his cabinet for parliamentary approval, is reportedly considering refusal to give up power.
- B. Former Defense Minister Pacciardi and Senate president Merzagora have also hinted at the need for extra-constitutional measures.
- C. It is also possible that anti-Gronchi men among the military might make common cause with adventurers seeking power.
- D. While the premier can assume emergency powers under the constitution, the president, as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, would have decisive role.

III. Italy's pro-Western orientation can be expected to continue under any foreseeable constitutional government, but unless a solidly-based center-left government can be found, the prospects are for a long period of political instability,

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